

Delta Independent Science Board Teleconference Meeting Summary

**15th Floor Main Conference Room, Park Tower
980 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814**

1. Welcome and Declarations (Lund)

Board members present: Jay Lund; via telephone: Brian Atwater, Steve Brandt, Liz Canuel, Tracy Collier, Joe Fernando, Richard Norgaard, Vince Resh, and Joy Zedler.

Declarations: Zedler reported that she has officially retired from the University of Wisconsin.

2. Delta ISB Chair's Report and Business Matters (Lund)

The Board is in varying states of progress with its reviews and has embarked on the initial stages of recruitment for the next Lead Scientist.

3. Closed session: Personnel matters (Lund)

4. Reopen meeting and report out on closed session (Lund)

The Delta Independent Science Board (ISB or Board) discussed the draft Lead Scientist Recruitment and Hiring Process document that has been crafted by hiring representatives at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and executive staff at the Delta Stewardship Council (Council). The Board has suggested revisions to the document.

Action: Board members send suggested revisions to Souza, who will consolidate and forward to Lund. Lund will provide suggestions to the draft process document and forward to the Council and USGS.

The deadline for candidates to submit a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to USGS is August 29, 2016. Souza will distribute all candidate packages received on September 1, 2016 to the Delta ISB in preparation for the September 8, 2016 Delta ISB teleconference. The Board needs to confirm which Delta ISB members will participate on the interview panel. Brandt, Canuel (if interviews are scheduled on sequential days), Collier, Fernando, Lund and Resh are willing to help, if needed. Zedler recused herself from participation since she is a long-time collaborator with one of the applicants.

5. Council Chair's report (Fiorini)

Council Chair Fiorini gave a brief overview of the many processes underway dealing with California water policy and opined that never has there been as much activity related to the history of water policy, than right now. Fiorini highlighted:

- The California Water Commission work that is well underway in the process of creating guidelines for the disbursement of the \$2.7 billion for investments in water storage projects, passed as part of Proposition 1: the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014.
- The submission of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's revised biological assessment for California WaterFix to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to begin the formal consultation process under Section 7 of the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA).

- The submission of DWR's application to apply for an incidental take permit for California WaterFix, under section 2081(b) of the Fish and Game Code.
- State Water Resources Control Board efforts-
 - Current hearings about the change in point of diversion for California WaterFix
 - Phase I of the Water Quality Control Plan update - The Final Substitute Environmental Document (SED) was expected in July 2016 but not yet released
 - Phase II of the Water Quality Control Plan update - The Draft Scientific Basis Report identifying science supporting potential changes to the Bay-Delta Plan and range of alternatives for evaluation in Draft SED, expected to be released in September or October 2016 for public and peer review
- Delta Stewardship Council and Delta Science Program (DSP) efforts-
 - Ongoing work on the Delta Levees Investment Strategy (DLIS)
 - A joint meeting of the Council and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board to discuss the integration of the updated flood control plan for the California and the Delta-focused work of the Council
 - Prioritization of State investments in Delta levees and other potential Delta Plan provisions
 - An amendment to the Delta Plan based on the Council-adopted [Principles for Water Conveyance in the Delta, Storage Systems, and the Operation of Both to Achieve the Coequal Goals](#)
 - Coordination of an independent review of the Biological Assessment for the California WaterFix that was submitted to the NMFS and USFWS on August 2, 2016.

Fiorini suggested that one of the ways the Board's review of the Delta as an Evolving Place could be structured, is to tightly link it with the work that the Council is doing as part of the DLIS by considering how to evaluate risks to transportation, legacy towns and agriculture. Inclusion of these topics in the Board review would help to further inform the Council.

Lastly, Fiorini mentioned that the recent [Delta Smelt chapter](#) in the [2016 State of Bay Delta Science](#) recalled that recommendations for ecosystem-based management of the Delta were offered in the [Recovery Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Native Fishes](#) (USFWS 1995) but were never adopted because actions to protect Delta Smelt under the ESA, trumped actions for the other seven native species identified in the Plan. Fiorini suggested that it's time to take a close look at how the ESA operates in the Delta and explore whether the creation of a special designation or regional permit for the Delta would allow for greater flexibility and experimentation.

6. Delta Lead Scientist Report (Dahm, and others)

Dahm highlighted several items that he will share during his update at the August 25, 2016 Council meeting: The [2017 Delta Science Fellowship](#) call was released on July 26, 2016. The deadline for applications is September 23, 2016 and awards are expected in February 2017 for duration of two years. The priority research topics are:

- Assessing the effects of extreme events (e.g. drought, flood, seismic) on the Delta
- Effectiveness and implications of habitat restoration actions
- Life histories, habitat requirements, and food webs of Delta estuarine and migratory species in a changing landscape
- Science supporting the enhancement and protection of the cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta

Steven Margulis (UCLA) has reported that the severity of the 2015 snowpack deficit was a one in 700 year event. The lack of snow was more prominent in the intermediate and lower levels while the highest levels had about 30% of normal.

The Delta Science Program is organizing a series of Brown Bag seminars linked to the *2016 State of Bay Delta Science (SBDS)* chapters. The intention is not to recapitulate the chapters, but to explore where we should be headed. The first in the series was about [assessing extinction in fishes and preparing for the extinction of Delta Smelt](#), delivered by Jason Baumsteiger and Peter Moyle. Brown Bag seminars are archived on the Council website.

Jessica Law reported that the Science Enterprise Workshop has moved from a conceptual stage, into planning and implementation. Collier and Lund are part of the large planning committee that hopes to have the final agenda and registration live by the end of September. November 1, 2016 will be devoted to understanding cross sections of each system. November 2, 2016 will be focused on panel discussions emphasizing social science perspectives. November 3, 2016 will be reserved for smaller group discussions between invited policy and decision makers. Next steps in understanding the Delta's Science Enterprise, will be highlighted at the November 14, 2016 Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee Meeting (DPIIC).

Sam Harader reported that the Delta Regional Monitoring Program has requested that the Delta Science Program coordinate a review of its monitoring plan. The review will be held in a video teleconference format on August 23, 2016. Details are [here](#).

Darcy Austin reported that the first issue of the *2016 State of Bay Delta Science (SBDS)* was published as part 1 in a special issue of the San Francisco Estuary & Watershed Science [volume 14\(2\)](#). There are chapters about Delta Smelt, salmonids, predators and changing landscapes. The second issue is expected by October and will contain chapters on climate change, levees, contaminants and food supply. The third issue is expected in December and will contain a chapter about modeling, sediment and transport, and science synthesis. There will also be summary of the entire *2016 SBDS*, targeted towards policy makers and expected prior to the third December issue. Elements of outreach include the November 14, 2016 DPIIC meeting, a special session at the 2016 Bay Delta Science Conference, and an online forum to capture individuals thoughts about issues that were not covered, emerging science or topics for future consideration.

Rainer Hoenicke reported that on July 15, 2016 a few Board members met with Science Program staff to discuss the DSP's efforts on facilitating a Comprehensive Monitoring Review and the role of the Delta ISB in this process. The thrust of the initial part of the effort, not to begin before 2017, would be to determine all the monitoring being conducted by various entities, how they link together, and how they inform the Delta Plan. Currently, there is no independent comprehensive monitoring review for the Delta ISB. This is a DSP effort that the Delta ISB will be providing input and oversight into. The Delta ISB will consider its options for a review on monitoring in October once the DSP's efforts are more well-defined.

7. Status of other reviews:

- Water Quality. The [final prospectus](#) has been placed on the website and the group is moving towards collecting more information and data by way of an electronic questionnaire (e.g. Survey Monkey). The group is also reaching out to the Delta Conservancy in an effort to involve more constituents. **Action: Staff will convert the word version of the questionnaire into an electronic format and then distribute that to the Board for a one week comment period. Subsequent to resolving any Board concerns or suggestions, the questionnaire will be sent to the list of recipients that was presented at today's meeting.**

- Delta Levees. The draft meeting report was distributed to the entire Board. The next step is to circulate it to the workshop participants and receive public comment. **Action: Atwater will attend to suggestions sent to him by the Board and staff will subsequently distribute a revised version for a four-week public comment period.**
- Water Supply Reliability. Lund has completed the water supply reliability chapter for the *2016 SBDS*. It will be published in the September issue of San Francisco Estuary & Watershed Science. Lund feels that will provide an additional venue with which to discuss the Board review on topic.
- Adaptive Management. Zedler and Resh have commented on a revised outline of a separate publication provided by Wiens. They're deciding who will take the first cut at assembling text. They have converged on a positive message for a targeted audience of those concerned with the Delta. The paper will not focus on what is wrong, but what can be right.
- Delta as an Evolving Place. Lund has not submitted the agricultural piece to Norgaard yet. Lund echoed Council Chair Fiorini's suggestion from earlier in the meeting – that the structure of the Delta as an Evolving Place review could be tightly linked to the work that the Council is doing as part of the DLIS by considering how to evaluate risks to loss of transportation, legacy towns and agriculture.

8. Meeting outcomes (Lund)

- The next meeting will be a teleconference on September 8, 2016 from 9 am – noon.
- Major meeting items include a closed session about the Lead Scientist recruitment and a discussion about how the Board should weigh in on the final EIR for California WaterFix.

9. Public comment for items not on the agenda

There were no comments from the public.

10. Meeting adjourned